

Undated

East-West Associates

environmental & community planning

MEMORANDUM

To: Joseph E. Petrillo, Tom Mikkelsen

From: MSM

Re: Trail Workshop, August 11

On August 11, EWA staff traveled to Los Angeles to discuss the development of the Winding Way trail project with the various parties involved in this project. Present at the meeting were: R.J. Alexander and Dan Kowalczyk of LA County Waterworks, Mike Nagao and Marvin Chong of LA County Engineering, Dixie Nowell (South Coast District, Coastal Commission), Steve Howe (Coastal Commission State Office), Linda Palmer (Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council), Toe Inuzuka, Dave Kilmurray, Gary McSweeney and Aiden Numa of CalTrans, Betty Wiechec (Mountains Restoration Trust) and Sonia Thompson (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy).

The meeting opened with Betty Wiechec's description of the proposed project, including trail improvements along the Winding Way trail dedication and the hopeful connection with the Chiate trail easement south of the Pacific Coast Highway leading to the beach. The various issues involving those present were then discussed, as follows:

1) Crossing the Pacific Coast Highway

With the use of the Chiate easement, people hiking on the Winding Way trail would need to cross the Pacific Coast Highway to travel to the beach. Several alternatives for solving this problem were discussed:

a) Light for crossing: A stoplight or flashing light could be installed for safe crossing. CalTrans was not at all supportive of this suggestion, as it would have too large of an impact on the flow of traffic. Similarly, a crosswalk was not acceptable to them.

b) Rumirez Tunnel: Rumirez Tunnel travels under the Pacific Coast Highway approximately 800 feet west of the Winding Way intersection. It was discussed that hikers could travel along the shoulder of the highway to the tunnel, cross underneath the highway, and travel back up the shoulder to the trail leading to the beach. CalTrans was supportive of this idea and after the workshop, CalTrans representatives, Sonia Thompson, Betty Wiechec and myself visited the site to better assess this alternative. Upon looking at the situation, CalTrans indicated that the shoulder is not wide enough for such a project (they require sufficient space for cars to pull off the road).

c) Overpass: CalTrans suggestion was that an overpass be constructed connecting the two trail easements. They offered an estimated cost of \$100,000 for such a facility. Past Coastal Conservancy projects involving overpasses indicate that the facility would cost more in the neighborhood of \$300,000. The anticipated

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use of the trail system would not merit such an expense.

d) Keeping the two trails separate

The final option is to develop and open both trails but to not connect them across the highway. Parking for those using the Chiate easement exists along the south side of the highway. Additional land for parking adjacent to the Winding Way site would need to be purchased. Since the County is in the process of purchasing land in the area for their water project, a parking area could be provided in conjunction with their project.

Upon discussing this with the County people, no decision could be reached. Staff will keep in touch with them about this option. Also, the County improvements made along the highway with their new water project are in the planning phase. This being the case, we will continue to work with the County and CalTrans to include in this design accommodations for use of both the Chiate and Winding Way Trails.

2) Parking

CalTrans indicated that they would not allow horse trailers to park along the shoulder of the highway. Consequently, the nonprofit organizations involved in this project will be working with Albert Levinson (the major property owner in the vicinity) and the County (with their ongoing acquisitions) to determine appropriate locations for parking.

Future of Project

The feasibility of this project is thus dependent on either providing crossing so that people using the Winding Way Trail can cross the highway and park within the existing parking facility south of the highway, or providing parking north of the highway. These options will be explored further in the next month.

Following the meeting, EWA staff visited the Chiate easement, meeting with Ken Chiate to walk the length of the trail. For the first two-thirds of the trail, the easement follows an existing driveway. It then slopes down a minor hill and drops into a gorge which contains water during the winter months. The final 500 feet travel the length of the drainage course, ending at the beach. Improvements would have to be made to this site in order to open it for public use. The Mountains Restoration Trust will be assessing the improvements they would like to propose within the near future. No other trail easements lie within the near vicinity which could be used to connect with the Winding Way trail. Since this site is not located within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, improvements for the trail would need to come from either the Conservancy's Access or Nonprofits Programs.